

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended) In a computer mediated persistent conversation system having one or more computers with which each of multiple users author and post messages in one or more conversations, the system including a computer-readable medium that stores computer software instructions for operating the system, the improvement instructions comprising:

~~computer software instructions stored on the computer-readable medium~~
for obtaining selected information from the one or more conversations;

~~computer software instructions stored on the computer-readable medium~~
for storing the selected information and forming from it aggregated conversation data that includes aggregations according to time, conversation, and authoring user;

~~computer software instructions stored on the computer-readable medium~~
for tagging the messages when they are posted by authoring users as being of one or more selected message types comprising a Question message type indicating that a message is a question and an Answer message type indicating that a message is an answer to a Question message type; and

~~computer software instructions stored on the computer-readable medium~~
for providing the aggregated conversation data and message type tags to users of the computer mediated persistent conversation system.

2. (original) The system of claim 1 in which the computer mediated persistent conversation system includes any of Usenet (NNTP) newsgroups, World Wide Web (HTTP) message or bulletin board sites, email lists, or online chat rooms.

3. (cancelled)

4. (original) The system of claim 1 in which the aggregated conversation data includes plural aggregations according to plural time periods or resolutions.

5. (original) The system of claim 4 in which the plural aggregations according to plural time periods or resolutions include aggregations according to two or more of the time periods or resolutions: day, week, month, quarter, year, year-to-date.

6. (original) The system of claim 1 in which the aggregated conversation data includes plural aggregations according to plural conversation characteristics or identifiers.

7. (original) The system of claim 6 in which plural conversations are related by plural hierarchical levels of organization, the plural aggregations according to plural conversation characteristics or identifiers including aggregations according to two or more of the hierarchical levels of organization.

8. (original) The system of claim 1 in which the aggregated conversation data includes plural aggregations according to plural authoring user characteristics or identifiers.

9. (currently amended) The system of claim 8 in which the plural authoring user characteristics or identifiers correspond to plural hierarchical levels of authoring user identifiers, the plural aggregations according to plural authoring user characteristics or identifiers including aggregations according to two or more of the hierarchical levels of authoring user identifiers.

10. (original) The system of claim 1 in which one or more reply messages respond to an initial message and the aggregated conversation data provided to users includes an indication of a fraction of an authoring user's messages that are replies in a selected one of the conversations relative to the authoring user's reply messages in all of the conversations.

11. (original) The system of claim 1 in which one or more reply messages respond to an initial message and the aggregated conversation data provided to users includes an indication of a number of replies by an authoring user and a number of initial messages to which replies are posted.

12. (original) The system of claim 1 in which one or more reply messages respond to an initial message and the aggregated conversation data provided to users

includes an indication of a number of days on which an authoring user posted a message in a selected one of the one or more conversations relative to a number of days on which an authoring user posted a message in any of the one or more conversations.

13-14. (cancelled)

15. (previously presented) The system of claim 1 in which the one or more selected message types includes a Closed message type indicating that a message of the Answer message type resolves a message of the Question message type.

16. (previously presented) The system of claim 1 in which one or more reply messages respond to an initial message, the one or more selected message types including a Closed message type indicating that a selected reply message resolves the initial message.

17. (original) The system of claim 1 in which the aggregated conversation data are provided to users as a profile that references a selected user or a conversation.

18-34. (cancelled)

35. (currently amended) A method for in-a-computer mediat[ed]ing persistent conversations system having one or more computers with which each of between multiple people who users author and post messages in one or more of the conversations, a method comprising for the actions of:

obtaining selected information from the one or more conversations;

storing the selected information and forming from it aggregated conversation data that includes aggregations according to time, conversation, and authoring user person;

tagging identifying the messages when they are posted by authoring users people as being of one or more selected message types, comprising a Question message type indicating that a message is a question and an Answer message type indicating that a message is an answer to a Question message type; and

providing the aggregated conversation data and tags identifying the message type to ~~the people-users of the computer-mediated persistent conversation system.~~

36. (currently amended) The method of claim 35 in which the ~~computer mediated persistent conversation system includes~~ messages are authored and posted in any of Usenet (NNTP) newsgroups, World Wide Web (HTTP) message or bulletin board sites, email lists, or online chat rooms.

37. (currently amended) The method of claim 35 in which the ~~computer mediated persistent conversation system includes~~ messages are authored and posted in Usenet (NNTP) newsgroups.

38. (new) The system of claim 1 in which the one or more selected message types further comprises at least one of:

- a Review message type indicating that a message is a review of book, article, film or other piece of work;

- a Event message type indicating that a message identifies a past or future event;

- a FAQ message type indicating that a message identifies Frequently Asked Questions;

- a Claim message type indicating that a message includes particular claims made by the authoring user; and

- a Code Sample message type indicating that a message includes software code and supporting information about the software code.

39. (new) The method of claim 35 in which the one or more selected message types further comprises at least one of:

- a review message type indicating that a message is a review of book, article, film or other piece of work;

- a event message type indicating that a message identifies a past or future event;

a FAQ message type indicating that a message identifies Frequently Asked Questions;

a claim message type indicating that a message includes particular claims made by the authoring person; and

a code sample message type indicating that a message includes software code and supporting information about the software code.

40. (new) A process for mediating one or more persistent conversations between multiple people who author and post messages in one or more of the conversations comprising process actions for:

obtaining selected information from each conversation;

aggregating the selected information in different ways including aggregations according to time, conversation, and authoring person;

tagging the messages when they are posted by authoring people, wherein a tag identifies the message as being of one or more selected message types;

providing the aggregated information and message type tags to the people.

41. (new) The process of claim 40, wherein the one or more selected message types comprise at least one of:

a Question message type indicating that a message is a question;

an Answer message type indicating that a message is an answer to a Question message type;

a Closed message type indicating either that a message of the Answer message type resolves a message of the Question message type, or that a selected reply message resolves an initial message.

a Review message type indicating that a message is a review of book, article, film or other piece of work;

an Event message type indicating that a message identifies a past or future event;

a FAQ message type indicating that a message identifies Frequently Asked Questions;

a Claim message type indicating that a message includes particular claims made by the authoring person; and

a Code Sample message type indicating that a message includes software code and supporting information about the software code.

42. (new) The process of claim 40, wherein the aggregated information includes plural aggregations according to plural time periods or resolutions, the plural time periods or resolutions comprising: a day, a week, a month, a quarter, a year, and year-to-date.